#14

12

84th Congress
2d Session

COMMITTEE PRINT

UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

MAY 1 7 1956

MAIN
READING ROOM

MEMORANDUM

BY THE

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

ON

Columbia Basin Project (Washington) Acreage Restrictions

AND

S. 3730

Soap Lake Problem, Columbia Basin Project

MAY 2, 1956

Printed for the use of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs

Senate

UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON : 1956

76763

COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

JAMES E. MURRAY, Montana, *Chairman*

CLINTON P. ANDERSON, New Mexico	EUGENE D. MILLIKIN, Colorado
RUSSELL B. LONG, Louisiana	GEORGE W. MALONE, Nevada
HENRY M. JACKSON, Washington	ARTHUR V. WATKINS, Utah
JOSEPH C. O'MAHONEY, Wyoming	HENRY C. DWORSHAK, Idaho
ALAN BIBLE, Nevada	THOMAS H. KUCHEL, California
RICHARD L. NEUBERGER, Oregon	FRANK A. BARRETT, Wyoming
WILLIAM R. LAIRD III, West Virginia	BARRY GOLDWATER, Arizona

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IRRIGATION AND RECLAMATION

CLINTON P. ANDERSON, New Mexico, *Chairman*

HENRY M. JACKSON, Washington	EUGENE D. MILLIKIN, Colorado
JOSEPH C. O'MAHONEY, Wyoming	ARTHUR V. WATKINS, Utah

STEWART FRENCH, *Chief Counsel and Staff Director*
RICHARD L. CALLAGHAN, *Chief Clerk*
N. D. MCSHERRY, *Assistant Chief Clerk*
GOODRICH W. LINEWEAVER, *Committee Assistant for Reclamation*

Documents
Expedited

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	1
Part I—Soap Lake (Columbia Basin) problem	3
Text of S. 3730	3
Telegram from mayor of Soap Lake	3
Letter to Acting Secretary of the Interior from Senator James E. Murray, May 1, 1956	3
Extracts from reclamation report on Soap Lake problems	4
Part II—Columbia Basin acreage problem	11
Letter from Quincy-Columbia Basin District president, April 20, 1956	11
Text of suggested amendments to Columbia Basin Project Act	13
Letter to Senator James E. Murray from Senators Warren G. Magnuson and Henry M. Jackson, April 25, 1956	14
Letter to Acting Secretary of the Interior from Senator James E. Murray, April 23, 1956	15
Telegram from Columbia Basin Commission, April 23, 1956	15
Telegram from president, board of directors, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, April 24, 1956	16
List of witnesses	16

CONTENTS

Foreword 1
Part I. Army Leaders Begin Preparations 3
Text of S. 2780 8
Telegram from Senator [illegible] 9
Letter to Army Secretary [illegible] 9
May 1, 1956 10
Telegram from Secretary [illegible] 11
Part II. Committee Hears Witnesses 11
Letter from [illegible] 12
Text of Army Secretary's Statement 70
Letter to Secretary [illegible] 71
June 20, 1956 72
Letter to Army Secretary [illegible] 73
June 22, 1956 74
Telegram from Chairman [illegible] 75
Telegram from Senator [illegible] 76
June 24, 1956 77
Part of Testimony 78

[COMMITTEE PRINT]

MAY 2, 1956

MEMORANDUM BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS ON S. 3730

COLUMBIA BASIN PROJECT (WASHINGTON) ACREAGE RESTRICTIONS AND SOAP LAKE PROBLEM, COLUMBIA BASIN PROJECT

FOREWORD

At the request of Senators Magnuson and Jackson, two hearings have been set for Monday, May 7, on important matters relating to the Columbia Basin reclamation project in Washington State. Both hearings will be held in Room 224, Senate Office Building, by the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation, Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

The first hearing will be at 10 a. m. on S. 3730, a bill to provide for protecting Soap Lake in connection with the Columbia Basin project. Allegations that the medicinal values of the waters of Soap Lake have been adversely affected by the irrigation operations of the Columbia Basin project have been made. Exhaustive investigations have been made by the Bureau of Reclamation of possible ways and means of combating the situation. A report from the Department of the Interior on the subject is available.

Official comments from the Department on S. 3730 have been requested.

At 2 p. m., May 7, a hearing will be held on communications received by Chairman Murray from Senators Magnuson and Jackson and from Earl Gregory, president, Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District, on behalf of that organization and the other two irrigation districts of the Columbia Basin project. Mr. Gregory's letter outlines problems relating to acreage limitations growing out of the rigid provisions of the Columbia Project Act of 1943 as contracted with the traditional restrictions of the reclamation law of 1902 as amended.

Attached to Mr. Gregory's letter are suggested drafts of legislation for consideration of the subcommittee.

Comments of the Department of the Interior have been requested on the problems set forth in Mr. Gregory's letter as well as on the suggested drafts of legislation which would amend the Columbia Basin Project Act.

PART I—SOAP LAKE (COLUMBIA BASIN) PROBLEM

TEXT OF S. 3730

The text of S. 3730, introduced by Mr. Magnuson (for himself and Mr. Jackson) is as follows:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in the interest of minimizing the dilution of the existing mineral concentration in the waters of Soap Lake, Washington, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to continue to operate and maintain the existing facilities of the Columbia Basin project with funds made available for the construction, operation, and maintenance of that project with the objectives of controlling the maximum water level of Soap Lake and intercepting to the extent feasible project-contributed waters which might dilute the mineral waters of the Lake, and to allocate an appropriate share of the cost of the activities associated with such water interception and removal. The Secretary is hereby authorized to utilize funds made available for the construction of the Columbia Basin project, Washington, to construct such additional protection and interception works, and to repair, replace, and improve the existing works to augment such water control and removal activities, in an amount of $:

Provided, That the portion of the construction costs of such additional protection works which the Secretary determines to be beyond the ability of the water users to pay shall be charged to, and returnable to the reclamation fund from, net revenues derived from the sale of power from the Columbia Basin project which are over and beyond the amounts required to amortize the power investment in said project and to return interest on the unamortized balance of said investment.

TELEGRAM FROM MAYOR OF SOAP LAKE

MY DEAR SENATOR: I understand a hearing will be held on May 7 pertaining to Columbia Basin project at which time representatives of the Columbia Basin Commission will be present. If hearing on Soap Lake problem could be held on the 8th or 9th it would not necessitate another trip for the Columbia Basin Commission representative. Would appreciate hearing from you on this matter as soon as possible so I can be in Washington at least 2 days previous to the hearing.

Mayor M. R. NEWELL,
Soap Lake, Wash.

LETTER TO ACTING SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR FROM SENATOR MURRAY

MAY 1, 1956.

Hon. CLARENCE A. DAVIS,
Acting Secretary of the Interior,
Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: At the request of Senators Magnuson and Jackson, a hearing has been set for 10 a. m., Monday, May 7, in room 224, Senate Office Building, on S. 3730, to provide for protecting Soap Lake, Wash., in connection with the Columbia Basin project, Washington. The hearing will be before the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation. Mr. Bennett's office has been advised by telephone

of this hearing, with the request that comments of the Department be available by the time of the hearing on May 7, and that authoritative spokesmen for the Department or the Bureau of Reclamation also be on hand.

The report of the Department, transmitted with your letter of April 27, 1956, is available and is being reviewed by the staff. A spokesman should be prepared should the subcommittee desire to go into the details of the report.

Sincerely,

JAMES E. MURRAY, *Chairman.*

EXTRACTS FROM RECLAMATION REPORT

Under date of April 27, 1956, Acting Interior Secretary Davis transmitted a copy of a report on factual engineering and economic information on the Soap Lake situation prepared by the Bureau of Reclamation. The introduction, summary, and geological history in the report are as follows:

INTRODUCTION

Soap Lake is located about 6 miles northeast of Ephrata, Wash. It has a surface area of about 840 acres at its present elevation of 1,076 and contains approximately 25,000 acre-feet of water. It lies in a closed basin and is the southernmost member of a chain of lakes in the lower Grand Coulee. Soap Lake is highly mineralized as it has no natural outlet and loses water only by evaporation. It is fed primarily from subsurface sources with water entering through basalt bedrock or gravel-filled channels.

Over a period of many years, the lake waters have developed a "layered" condition. Prior to 1947 the upper layer of water, comprising approximately 24,000 acre-feet and extending to a depth of about 62 feet, had a salinity of about 35,000 to 40,000 parts per million (3.5 to 4.0 percent). The lower layer of water, comprising approximately 1,000 acre-feet and extending to the maximum lake depth of 96 feet, has a salinity ranging from 40,000 to 144,000 parts per million (4.0 to 14.4 percent). The mineralized water in the upper layer of the lake is used for bathing and internal use.

In the decade prior to 1947 the lake level remained fairly constant because of the natural balance maintained between precipitation and evaporation. In recent years, however, the lake level has been rising because of increased precipitation, subnormal evaporation, and the effects of irrigation operations on the Columbia Basin project. The city of Soap Lake, a community of about 2,500 people, lies on the south shore of Soap Lake. The West Canal, a major feature of the Columbia Basin irrigation system, traverses on the east, north, and west of the lake and supplies irrigation water to some 2,400 acres of land (without block 91) within the Soap Lake drainage basin.

The problem, as viewed by the citizens of the city of Soap Lake, is how to maintain the salinity of the lake and prevent flood damage to their property and to city facilities. From the Bureau's viewpoint the problem is how best to take care of the water, for which it may be responsible, that is entering the Soap Lake Basin from irrigation system leakage. In trying to arrive at a solution to this problem it

was found that leakage from the irrigation system when added to other inflow created a flood condition. This flood condition if allowed to go uncontrolled would have eventually contaminated a considerable part of the irrigation water supply. It was found that this flood condition could not be controlled by interception alone. Therefore pumping from the lake was necessary. This lake pumping reduced the salt concentration in the upper layer of the lake. As a result, investigations were made of the mineralized properties of the lake, effects of inflows, and various means for controlling or maintaining the present salinity. These investigations showed that it would not be possible to intercept sufficient quantities of water to prevent dilution of the lake waters. Therefore, the only method for maintaining the present salinity would involve a demineralization or evaporation plant with resultant high costs for construction and perpetual operation.

As a part of the problem, it was also necessary to evaluate the benefits to the Nation and to the city of Soap Lake that would result from irrigation of some 5,300 acres (block 91) north and east of Soap Lake. Return flows from about one-half of that area, scheduled for development in 1961, would affect the plans for control of the level or salinity of the lake waters.

The rising lake level has endangered the city sewage disposal system, has flooded beaches and some buildings, and has contributed to the flooding of basements due to rising ground water adjacent to the lake. The primary State highway paralleling the east shore of the lake has also been endangered. The mineralized concentration of the upper layer of the lake has been reduced both by the additional water entering the lake and the removal of an appreciable part of the dissolved salts by pumping to prevent flood damage. The lower layer of water in the lake has remained unaffected both as to volume and salinity.

The Bureau has operated control works since early 1953, including interception wells and direct pumping from Soap Lake and Lake Lenore. These control works were operated to prevent or minimize flood damage, prevent contamination of irrigation supply, and provide some storage space in the lake in the event of an unforeseen emergency such as a canal break. This pumping was conducted initially in cooperation with the city of Soap Lake. Recently city officials and local civic organizations have complained about direct pumping from the lake. However, in the best public interests pumping from the lake was continued into March 1956.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From the data presented in this report, it is possible to make the following conclusions:

1. The water surface elevations of Lake Lenore and Soap Lake were higher in 1951 than the average for the past decade, and would have continued to rise at least through 1953 due to natural conditions, regardless of any operations on the Columbia Basin project.

2. Inflow to Soap Lake in 1952 and 1953, resulting from natural conditions, exceeded the evaporation loss from the lake by approximately 2,200 acre-feet. That condition would have resulted in a rise in the lake surface elevation in those 2 years of approximately 2.5

76763—56——2

feet (above its elevation on January 1, 1952) if the Columbia Basin project had not existed.

3. Since it is estimated that the lake surface would have reached at least elevation 1,079.4 without the project, and since some of the basement floors are between elevations 1,079.5 and 1,080.5, it appears that without the project there would have been water in these basements, due to the natural ground-water gradient to the lake.

4. A considerable part of the excess inflow to the Soap Lake Basin has been from sources over which the Bureau has no control. The estimated total inflow in excess of evaporation to Soap Lake Basin since the beginning of the operation of the irrigation system is 27,250 acre-feet. Of this total, 2,200 acre-feet have been from natural causes; 7,790 acre-feet have been contributed by return flow from farming operations beyond the control of the Bureau; and 17,260 acre-feet have been contributed by losses from the irrigation system. An estimated 6,150 acre-feet remain in ground storage, leavinga net excess inflow to Soap Lake of 21,100 acre-feet.

5. The Bureau has pumped 21,240 acre-feet from wells and directly from Soap Lake or 3,980 acre-feet more than the contribution from the irrigation system.

6. Expenditures by the Bureau to January 1, 1956, have amounted to $872,900, with average annual operating cost of about $50,000.

7. Studies and tests have established that Soap Lake is a saline body of water with two distinct and permanent layers of different density and salinity. As such, it appears to be conclusive that pumping from the upper layer of the lake will not adversely affect the quantity or quality of the lower layer. It also appears that it is possible to ultimately establish and maintain a two-layered lake, leaving its upper layer fresh and its lower layer highly saline.

8. It appears that the Government can successfully defend its position against all claims that are based upon dilution of mineral concentration. Two claims were received and processed, based on alleged flood damage resulting from project operations. These claims were denied by the Solicitor in his decision T–710 (Irrigation) rendered January 19, 1956.

9. It appears practical to ultimately intercept by means of wells 10,860 acre-feet annually, which amount is considerably more than the 8,630 acre-feet ultimate estimated annual contribution from project-controlled facilities. It can be concluded that it would be possible to continue to intercept and remove, without pumping directly from Soap Lake, a volume of water equivalent to that originating from the project-controlled facilities but not that resulting from farm irrigation.

10. It does not appear possible to reduce the total inflow of fresh water to the lake by interception to the extent that the reduced inflow will balance the loss by evaporation. Therefore, it can be concluded that it does not appear feasible to maintain the present mineral content of the upper layer of Soap Lake, and eventually this upper layer will become fresh.

11. Even though it does not appear feasible to maintain the salinity of the upper layer of Soap Lake, there still remains a problem of controlling the lake level to prevent flood damage to shoreline property and of controlling ground-water levels in the city of Soap Lake, to minimize damage such as basement flooding.

12. Control of the water-surface elevation of Soap Lake can be accomplished by any one or a combination of several engineering

plans. These plans would remove the excess water from the Soap Lake Basin by pumping or by gravity outlet. Costs of any one plan depend upon both the method of removing the excess water from the basin and the provisions made for delaying the freshening of the upper layer of Soap Lake.

13. The Bureau is presently providing lake-level control by pumping from 4 interception wells, a temporary pumping plant on Soap Lake, and 2 permanent Lake Lenore pumping plants. Unless additional authorization and funds are received from the Congress, the Bureau operating plan will be to continue operation of these existing control works to maintain the Soap Lake surface at about elevation 1,076 and to maintain ground-water levels in the city of Soap Lake so that damage could be minimized. The water surface of Lake Lenore will be lowered to or below the level of Soap Lake by 1957. A permanent control plan will be developed before the existing control works need replacement.

14. Comparative costs for six possible control plans, both with and without development of block 91, are given. Three plans are designated "lake-level control plans" representing pumping, gravity, and pump-gravity methods. Plan No. 1 is essentially a continuation of present operations with the addition of two more interception wells; plan No. 8 provides for immediate freshening of the upper layer of the lake with a permanent gravity outlet (tunnel); plan No. 9–A contemplates operation for about 14 years with present facilities, at which time the upper layer of the lake would be sufficiently fresh to utilize a gravity outlet. Four plans, designated "salinity control plans," incorporate various interception provisions to delay or prevent freshening of the upper layer of the lake. Plan No. 10–A provides for continuing with only the present interception wells; plan No. 10–B is the same as plan No. 1, which includes 2 new wells; plan No. 10–C would provide for 5 new wells at the ends of the lake and 10 deep wells into bedrock at the sides of the lake; plan No. 10–D would intercept as much water as possible by placing grout curtains in rock along the sides and wells at the ends of the lake—the residual inflow not intercepted would be evaporated.

15. Studies show that the benefit-cost ratios for development of block 91 are very favorable under any of the proposed plans for controlling the level of Soap Lake. Therefore, in the project interest, it can be concluded that block 91 should be developed essentially as programed.

16. The 3,205 residents of Soap Lake including Lakeview had a gross income of about $2,993,000 in 1955. The expected additional $1,160,000 net annual farm income and $162,000 farm labor wage under potential irrigation development would result in about $1,586,000 of net annual income to business operators and as wages to their employees. Block 91 alone, the development of which is largely dependent upon the solution of the Soap Lake problem, will contribute over $400,000 annually of net income to the adjacent townspeople. The more than 12,000 acres of potential irrigated lands, when added to that within the geographic market area of the city of Soap Lake, would support a city larger than Soap Lake. The degree to which the effect of the existing and potential irrigation development is reflected in the economy of Soap Lake will depend largely upon the actions taken by the Soap Lake business people to attract farm business.

17. Although the mineral waters of Soap Lake have acquired a reputation for widespread therapeutic properties—particularly in treating Buerger's disease, research at Soap Lake by the State of Washington, however, showed that the spa treatment was not a specific treatment for this disease and that the large percentage of ulcerative or gangrenous lesions which healed only indicated the normal tendency for such healing resulting from rest, cleanliness, and absence of ill-advised surgical procedures. The Federal Trade Commission ordered the manufacturer of salts evaporated from the lake water to cease representing that the salts would prevent, cure, or be beneficial in treating some 40 specific ailments, other than conditions which may be benefited by the laxative, diuretic, or cleansing properties of the salts.

BACKGROUND

The Bureau included in its early planning for the project system a pumping plant near the south end of Blue Lake to intercept underground canal and reservoir losses and prevent the accumulation of this seepage water in Lake Lenore and Soap Lake. This plan was later abandoned in favor of a pumping plant at the south end of Lake Lenore which would recapture more water at a lower cost.

Early in 1950, in advance of irrigation operations, it was apparent that the continued rise of lake levels would result in a hazard to property in the event of a canal break or other emergency after the start of canal operations in 1951. A series of observation wells and test pumping wells were therefore drilled to secure data on ground water tributary to Soap Lake.

Preliminary studies indicated that if adequate capacity could be obtained from pumping wells, it might be feasible to intercept and remove sufficient fresh water from the Soap Lake Basin—resulting from irrigation system losses, return flow from farms, or normal inflow from precipitation—to prevent further rise of the lake level. Under these studies, it was planned to convey the intercepted water through a concrete-lined channel and discharge it southward into Rocky Ford Creek, a tributary to Moses Lake. Yields from the wells that were insignificant and further consideration of this channel was postponed indefinitely.

When it became apparent in the late fall of 1952 that the seasonal rise in Soap Lake was encroaching on private and municipal property, the Bureau of Reclamation and the city of Soap Lake entered into a contract for joint participation in pumping from Soap Lake. Participation by the Bureau with the city of Soap Lake in pumping directly from the lake has been considered justified in preventing contamination of the irrigation supply and providing some storage space below the former high water levels. This storage space in the lake alleviates possibility of damages from flooding in the event of a canal break or other unforeseen emergency and prevents or reduces damage to property while studies are made as to the sources of waters entering the lake and the best possible plan for disposing of excess inflows.

Studies of other closed lake basins in eastern Washington show that their water surface elevations have had an upward trend during recent years and generally are higher than ever before recorded or remembered by local residents. The lakes studied include Medical Lake

near Spokane, Jameson Lake about 25 miles northwest of Ephrata in Moses Coulee, and a small lake near Washtucna. Studies have also been made of the relationships between precipitation, runoff, temperature, evaporation, and groundwater levels with respect to fluctuations in the level of Soap Lake. These studies show that even without irrigation operations the elevation of Soap Lake would have continued to rise during the past decade solely as a result of climatological conditions.

PHYSIOGRAPHIC SETTING OF SOAP LAKE

Soap Lake lies in a closed basin and is the southernmost of a chain of lakes in the old temporary bed of the Columbia River, which is now known as the lower Grand Coulee. The east and west sides of Soap Lake are bounded by high basalt cliffs, which rise several hundred feet above the lake. The area to the north, between Soap Lake and Lake Lenore, is covered with a fill of gravel and boulders overlying bedrock, and the lowest part of this topographic divide between the two lakes is about 30 feet above Soap Lake. To the south, the basin is blocked by a fill of sand, gravel, boulders, and some firm rock. The lowest point on the divide between Soap Lake and Rocky Ford Creek to the south is about 80 feet above Soap Lake. The glacial gravel fill at the north and south ends of Soap Lake is part of the Quincy Basin fill. At Ephrata, Wash., approximately 6 miles to the southwest, this fill is 200 feet higher than Soap Lake.

GEOLOGIC HISTORY

Practically all of the rock that underlies the Columbia Basin project is basalt; a molten rock which poured out on the earth's surface through deep fissures. This molten mass flowed over the land much like hot sirup, and then cooled to firm rock. This outpouring of liquid rock continued, spasmodically, until a huge thickness of basalt flows had accumulated in eastern Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Erosion and adjustment of the earth's crust took place after the basalt flow accumulation. The basalt flows on the project were folded into gentle hills and valleys, accompanied by some faulting where the rock was unable to withstand the folding action.

During recent geologic time, the Columbia River was blocked downstream from the present Grand Coulee Dam, Wash., by a huge mass of ice that squeezed down from the north. This created a huge lake that backed into Canada and Idaho, and eventually spilled over its side and flowed south into the Quincy Basin, creating another lake, which, in turn, overflowed south and returned to the Columbia River. This flood of river and glacier melt water created an immense waterfall a few miles north of what is now Coulee City, Wash. The face of the falls was undermined and receded northward to the Columbia River—thus creating the upper Grand Coulee.

A waterfall also developed at what is now Soap Lake and receded to the present Dry Falls at the north end of the lower Grand Coulee. About 40 cubic miles of rock were ripped out of the 2 coulees and some of it was deposited in the Quincy Basin as silts, sands, gravels, and boulders. Soap Lake lies in the lowest portion of the lower Grand Coulee, with the southern end blocked by the debris from the coulee excavations and by some firm rock.

PART II—COLUMBIA BASIN ACREAGE PROBLEM

LETTER FROM QUINCY-COLUMBIA BASIN DISTRICT PRESIDENT

APRIL 20, 1956.

The Honorable JAMES E. MURRAY,
Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

DEAR SENATOR MURRAY: The undersigned, the president of the board of directors of the Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District, and being authorized by the joint boards of directors of the 3 irrigation district boards in the Columbia Basin irrigation project, hereby petitions and requests on their behalf that your committee hold a hearing and recommend legislation to cure a defect in the Columbia Basin Project Act of 1943.

Under the project act any farm family on the Columbia Basin project, with minor exceptions, may only own 1 farm unit, the average size of such farm units being approximately 70 acres. Any farm family may lease additional land, if available, with a limitation upon total holdings of 160 acres.

Actual experience upon the project now demonstrates that it is generally impossible for a farm family to make a decent living on one farm unit. It is also apparent under actual conditions of farming the land of the project that a farmer cannot efficiently use the modern mechanized equipment necessary in present day farming on a single unit, nor can a farmer rotate his crops or adopt approved conservation practices to concerve his soil or build the land to the required productive capacity farmers wish to attain. With a limit of one unit ownership a farm family is required to raise soil-robbing cash crops instead of following a rotation program calculated to build up his farmstead.

The one unit limitation on ownership requires many farmers to become tenant farmers in order to have sufficient acreage to build a farm operation capable of earning a living in keeping with that earned by farmers on other Federal reclamation projects. Any limitation which increases or encourages tenant farming is not in the best interests of the project.

It must also be strenuously pointed out that under the one farm unit ownership per family limitation, that a farmer cannot and has not been able to secure adequate farm financing. Under policies of local banks and the Farmers Home Administration it has been and is virtually impossible for farmers to secure sufficient financing for his annual operations to say nothing of financing of permanent farm improvements and costs of original development. If a farmer is required to be at least a half tenant farmer his borrowing capacity is further restricted. The directors of the project irrigation districts have been informed that adequate farm financing is impossible under the one unit ceiling of the project act. We state that the removal of the limitation will allow the Farmers Home Administration and commercial banks to better perform their duties for which they are intended and as prescribed by law.

The farmers and their families on our project are not and do not intend to ask special privilege. All they ask is that limitations on the ownership of land peculiar to our project be removed and that we be placed on the same basis respecting ownership as is now in effect on all other Federal reclamation projects. The basic Reclamation Act of 1902, as amended, has been adequate for 54 years and, of course, we believe it will be as adequate on our project. Our request is based on fairness and upon the fact that the limitation peculiar to our project has proved itself unworkable and undesirable in actual practice.

During the 5-full-year period that the project has been in development there has been in excess of 3,000 farm units settled and served by project facilities. The majority of these settlers have moved in from outside the project. Notwithstanding the progress made to date, in fact because of the progress made in settlement which allows the Federal investment in the project to be used, the problems thereby encountered are causing chaos and impairment of morale of new farmers on a new project. The original framers of the project act anticipated that actual operating conditions would necessitate change and modification of the act to meet such conditions encountered after the experimental stage had been passed. Without appearing critical we say that it was their intention that actual experience was to be taken into consideration and that if changing economic conditions, market conditions, price changes, and crop adaptability were encountered that the act would be changed as required under such changed conditions. We believe that such chaos and impairment of farmers morale is mainly caused by an unenforceable provision which limits land ownership beyond a realistic point. Our position is that a reasonable law on landholding limitations, such as in the basic reclamation law, will correct the situation with which we are faced.

An inadequate law respecting a limit of one farm unit per family has made many honest and hard-working farm families seek information and counsel from the best available sources as to how they could acquire sufficient project lands to form an economically sound and technically workable farm. On the other hand, the officials charged with settlement of the farms of the project, along with the friends of the project, have over the life of the project given much counsel and information to the annual groups of new settlers coming on the land. This advice was honestly and sincerely given, but, under changing conditions, and not by reason of a lack of foresight, much of this advice has proven to be detrimental to the farmers' best interests in light of present-day attitudes of governmental officials in charge of the project.

The joint boards of the irrigation districts in the Columbia Basin project only ask for the change of the Columbia Basin Project Act respecting landholding limitations to bring it into line with the Reclamation Act of 1902, as amended. We do not at this time request that the antispeculation provisions of the project act be changed in any respect, but believe that such provisions should remain in the act as they now are until further experience should convince us otherwise. We realize that actual operation of the project has pointed up other matters which must be changed or modified. We believe that if the provision on landholding limitations are now corrected, that the joint boards and the Federal officials concerned can then sit down to recommend and agree on necessary improvements of our act and contract for the mutual benefit of landowner and Government.

We are also met with the requirement of securing congressional approval of the requested amendment in this session of Congress since the Columbia Basin Project Act was enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington. The State legislature meets in January and February of 1957 and not again until January and February of 1959. The amendment must be passed both in Congress and the Washington Legislature to be effective.

With this letter we enclose and attach a suggested amendment to the Columbia Basin Project Act, anticipating that it will be helpful to your committee.

The directors of the three irrigation districts in the Columbia Basin project wish to emphasize in closing that they are dedicated to the project and have dreams of assisting in making it the finest example of what reclamation can do for the people of this country. We want to attract to the project the settlers who can make this dream possible and see that these settlers can farm our lands in freedom and with maximum assurance that their effort will reward them commensurably.

Sincerely yours,

EARL S. GREGORY,
President, Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District and Delegate of the Joint Board of Directors of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Districts.

cc: The Honorable Warren G. Magnuson.
The Honorable Henry M. Jackson.

TEXT OF SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

Suggested amendments to the Columbia Basin Project Act (57 Stat. 14), as amended:

1. Amend section 2 (b) (iii) of such Act to read as follows:

"(iii) Water shall not be delivered from, through, or by means of the project works to or for lands not conforming in area and boundaries to the farm units covering the lands involved, not to or for the farm units held by any one landowner (A) which taken together comprise more than one hundred and sixty acres, or (B) in the case of a nominal quarter section comprising more than one hundred and sixty acres referred to in subdivision (i) of subsection (b) of this section, which comprise more than the acreage contained in such quarter section: *Provided*, That notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, a husband or a wife may each hold separately a total irrigable area in one or more farm units equal to that which may be held under this section by any other landowner: *Provided further*, That as to lands held by the one having equitable or legal title on May 27, 1937, or the heir or devisee of such owner, delivery may be made to or for a total irrigable area not exceeding the maximum provided in this section: *Provided further*, That it is intended that the amendments hereby made to this subdivision shall provide that the total irrigable area permitted to be held by a landowner under this section shall correspond to that which may be held by a landowner under section 46 of the Omnibus Adjustment Act of 1926 (amending the Federal reclamation laws) (44 Stat. 649; 43 U. S. C. 423e)."

2. Amend section 2 (b) (iv) of such Act by striking out "one farm unit" and inserting in lieu thereof "the farm unit or units permitted to be."

3. Amend section 2 (b) (v) of such Act to read as follows:

"(v) As used in this Act, the terms 'owner', 'landowner', and 'any one landowner' denote any individual, corporation, or joint-stock association; and the term 'lands within the project' denotes those lands within the boundaries of the existing Columbia Basin irrigation districts, or revisions thereof approved by the Secretary, which the Secretary determines may be supplied water from, through, or by means of the project works and are required to be included to provide for sound development and operation of the project."

LETTER FROM SENATORS MAGNUSON AND JACKSON

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS,
April 25, 1956.

Hon. JAMES E. MURRAY,
Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
United States Senate.

DEAR JIM: May we call your attention to the photostat copies of a letter to you of April 29 from Mr. Earl S. Gregory, president of the Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District, representing the joint board of directors of the three Columbia Basin irrigation districts. Mr. Gregory presents a critical problem that we feel should be thoroughly aired by your committee before a determination is made as to the need for legislative action.

We believe you will recall that the Columbia Basin Project Act of 1943 was enacted by the Congress during World War II and was admittedly an instrument designed to provide for a settlement program on the Columbia Basin project then under contruction. Veterans, as you are aware, were given preference in the purchase of lands sold by the Bureau of Reclamation and a large proportion of the 3,000 settlers on the Columbia Basin are veterans. Likewise, it was the general understanding that wehn settlement on the project should have advanced to a substantial degree, the settlers would be given an opportunity to express themselves as to whether or not the Project Act of 1943 should not be reviewed and amendments proposed in the light of conditions as they dvelooped. It is our understanding from a review of Mr. Gregory's letter and personal discussions with him and others that the desire of many project settlers is to have the acreage limitation provisions of the reclamation law applied to the Columbia Basin project.

Attached to Mr. Gregory's letter are two suggested amendments to the Columbia Basin Project Act (57 Stat. 14). It is suggested that you may desire to submit the amendments to the Secretary of the Interior for his comments and suggestions, which would be considered at a hearing which Senator Anderson, chairman of the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation, has set for Monday, May 7 at 2 p. m. in room 224, Senate Office Building. You may desire to have a committee print made of Mr. Gregory's communication and other pertinent material for the use of the committee in connection with this matter. The hearing, together with the comments of the Department of the Interior, should develop facts and circumstances that would serve as a guide to the committee in possible further consideration of the matter.

You will note that Mr. Gregory points out that action would be required by the legislature of Washington State before any revision of the Columbia Basin Project Act could become effective.

Sincerely yours,

WARREN G. MAGNUSON,
United States Senator.
HENRY M. JACKSON,
United States Senator.

LETTER TO ACTING SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR FROM SENATOR MURRAY

APRIL 23, 1956.

Hon. CLARENCE A. DAVIS,
Acting Secretary of the Interior,
Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: Attached you will find a photostat copy of a letter dated April 20, 1956, to me from Mr. Earl S. Gregory, president, Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District, on behalf of himself and the joint board of directors of the Columbia Basin Irrigation District. The letter, I believe, is self-explanatory and states the problem that Mr. Gregory brings to the attention of the committee. It primarily relates to bringing the Columbia Basin project under the acreage-limitation provisions of the reclamation law of 1902, as amended, in order to meet what he describes as a critical economic and agricultural situation that exists on the project under the provisions of the Columbia Basin Project Act of 1943.

Attached to Mr. Gregory's letter are two suggested amendments to the Columbia Basin Project Act (57 Stat. 14), as amended. The committee desires the comments of the Department, together with any pertinent information that may be available as to the situation existing on the Columbia Basin project, both with respect to the progress of settlement, the economic conditions of the settlers, their ability to secure adequate financing, and any other conditions that you may feel are pertinent. Should the Department have alternative suggestions in the form of amendments or otherwise, the committee will be pleased to have the information.

At the request of Senators Magnuson and Jackson, of Washington, a hearing has been set for Monday, May 7, at 2 p. m., in room 224, Senate Office Building, on Mr. Gregory's letter, the proposed amendments, and any other factors related to the subject. It will be appreciated if you will provide in writing by May 4 a report on this subject, together with any suggestions as to the form of legislation, other than the amendments suggested by Mr. Gregory, which might aid in resolving the problem he presents. Authoritative spokesmen for the Department should be available at the hearings to present any verbal comments supplementing the written report requested.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter and advise in due course who will represent the Department at the hearing.

Sincerely,

JAMES E. MURRAY, *Chairman.*

Copy to: Hon. Wilbur A. Dexheimer.
Elmer Bennett.

TELEGRAM FROM COLUMBIA BASIN COMMISSION

EPHRATA WASH., *April 23, 1956.*

GOODRICH LINEWEAVER,
Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee,
Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C.:

Columbia Basin Commission has endorsed proposals for needed corrections in the Columbia Basin project land limitation clause Project Act of 1943 as approved overwhelmingly by the joint boards of irrigation districts and as presented to you.

H. H. WALTER, *Columbia Basin Commission.*

TELEGRAM FROM PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, EAST COLUMBIA BASIN IRRIGATION DISTRICT

SPOKANE, WASH., *April 24, 1956.*

GOODRICH LINEWEAVER,
Interior and Insular Affairs Committee,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

DEAR SIR: We are in complete concurrence on request for a hearing on the landownership limitations on the Columbia Basin project. We would like to have the Columbia Basin Project Act amended to permit the ownership of 160 acres of land for individuals as established by basic reclamation law.

DON DAMON,
President of Board of Directors, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District.

LIST OF WITNESSESS

QUINCY-COLUMBIA BASIN IRRIGATION DISTRICT,
Quincy, Wash., April 27, 1956.

Mr. GOODRICH W. LINEWEAVER,
Interior and Insular Affairs Committee,
Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. LINEWEAVER: In connection with the hearing to be held on May 7, 1956, before the Subcommittee on Reclamation, we herewith send to you the list of witnesses who will urge that the Columbia Basin Project Act be amended to conform to the Reclamation Act of 1902, as amended, as pertains to limitations on holding land.

The following persons wish to appear before the subcommittee at the above-mentioned hearing:

1. Mr. W. A. Galbraith, chairman, Columbia Basin Commission of the State of Washington, and director of the Department of Conservation and Development of the State of Washington.
2. Senator George D. Zahn, member, Columbia Basin Commission of the State of Washington.
3. Hubert H. Walter, executive secretary of the Columbia Basin Commission of the State of Washington.
4. Don Damon, president of the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, and member of the Columbia Basin Commission of the State of Washington.
5. Earl S. Gregory, president of the Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District.
6. Roy A. Huse, secretary and attorney, Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District.

There is a possibility that the above-mentioned list of witnesses may of necessity be changed. However, if such be the case, we will give you immediate notification.

Kindest personal regards.

Very truly yours,

ROY A. HUSE,
Secretary, Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District.

○